United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council and Secretary-General welcome Bosnian Serbs' signing of Vance/Owen peace plan in Athens; Mr. Boutros-Ghali congratulates efforts of Co-Chairmen, says "extremely difficult" phase awaits as Security Council begins implementation of plan.

+ Secretary-General appoints Ismat Kittani as his Special Envoy for Tajikistan to promote a cease-fire and make recommendations on international monitoring mechanism in that country.

+ Colin Granderson of Trinidad and Tobago appointed Executive Director of United Nations/OAS International Civilian Mission to Haiti; Ian Martin of United Kingdom to be Director for Human Rights and Deputy to the Executive Director.

+ Colombian UNTAC Civilian Police monitor killed and Malaysian colleague severely injured in attack by unidentified armed assailants in Chamkar Leu district, Kompong Cham province.

+ Secretary-General authorizes waiver of immunity from legal process of Mexican United Nations Police Observer in El Salvador.

+ Only United Nations allows States to meet threats to human civilization, Secretary-General tells Rajiv Gandhi Foundation; threats to the environment, to development, to health and to peace cannot be met alone.

+ Freedom of expression is fundamental human right that should not be limited, Director-General of UNESCO says on International Press Freedom Day; stresses that press freedom is essential to development of democracy.

+ World Health Assembly begins forty-sixth session in Geneva today, with WHO seeking approval for $1.8 million budget for next two years.

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The members of the Security Council have welcomed the fact that the Vance-Owen Peace Plan had now been signed in its entirety by all the parties. In a Presidential statement issued tonight, they also informed the Secretary-General that they had already started consultations to consider urgently what concrete actions are to be taken in the light of Mr. Boutros-Ghali's report to the Council on the activities of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia.

Earlier today, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had welcomed the signing by Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic of the provisional provincial map and the Agreement on Interim Arrangements yesterday in Athens, according to a statement issued at Headquarters. All the Bosnian parties were now committed to the Vance/Owen plan for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it noted.

The entry into force of the plan was a major achievement as only a negotiated solution could bring peace to the region, the statement continued. The peace process would now enter an extremely difficult phase as the international community, through the Security Council, began to implement the plan. It would be "a large, expensive, complicated, difficult operation", it said.

The Secretary-General congratulated Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, on their work. He praised Mr. Vance's long service to the United Nations and to peace, and thanked the Government of Greece for its hospitality to the negotiators.

Meanwhile, the Co-Chairmen's spokesman, Fred Eckhard told correspondents today at Headquarters that the three Bosnian parties, during the interim period, were free to negotiate among themselves further changes in the map.

Mr. Eckhard said it might be possible for the three parties, if the ceace-fire was holding and the atmosphere improved, to work out marginal changes in the map before the final Constitution was drawn up. Such changes could be made through the Boundary Commission, which would be established to make "more precise" the lines on the map. The Commission could also make changes in Sarajevo Province, but without the constraint that these be only marginal, Fred Eckhard said.

Also this afternoon, speaking to correspondents about the situation in the former Yugoslavia following the signing of the Peace Agreements by all parties, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney indicated that his country would carefully examine any requests for further assistance from the Secretary-General "if that were deemed to contribute to the implementation of the preliminary agreement".

Prior to the press briefing, Mr. Mulroney had a meeting with Secretary-General for a tour d'horizon of the international situation.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to appoint Ismat Kittani his Special Envoy for Tajikistan to promote a cease-fire and to make recommendations on an international monitoring mechanism in that country, according to a letter to the President of the Security Council.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali wrote in the letter that the mandate of his new Special Envoy would also be to seek the help of neighbouring countries and others concerned in achieving peace in Tajikistan.

A small United Nations Mission of Observers (UNMOT) was sent to Tajikistan in January to monitor the situation and to provide up-to-date information on the conflict there. The Mission had recently warned that "there could be an escalation of the confrontation" in the border areas between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, "unless urgent action is taken to establish a cease-fire and a political dialogue among all concerned", the letter said.

The Security Council has welcomed the Secretary-General's appointment and his decision to extend the mandate of UNMOT for another three months so that it can continue its monitoring and humanitarian efforts and provide support to the Special Envoy.
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The Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) have agreed on the appointment of Colin Granderson (Trinidad and Tobago) as Executive Director of the United Nations/OAS Joint International Civilian Mission to Haiti, according to a United Nations spokesman.

Mr. Granderson, who holds the rank of Ambassador in his country's foreign service, will be responsible for directing the overall operation of the Joint Mission in Haiti. Up to now, he has been the Coordinator of the OAS contingent of the Mission.

The Secretaries-General have also agreed on the appointment of Ian Martin (United Kingdom) as Director for Human Rights and Deputy to the Executive Director of the Joint Mission. Mr. Martin, a former Secretary-General of Amnesty International, has been a Senior Associate with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in Washington D.C.

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Caicedo Venancio of Colombia, a Civilian Police monitor serving with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), was killed and a Malaysian Civilian Police severely injured in an attack on 30 April in Chamkar Leu district, Kompong Cham province. The two UNTAC peace-keepers had left their headquarters to transport one of their collegues, another Colombian Civilian Police, to a hospital in Kompong Cham, when they were attacked by a group of armed assailants.

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According to a spokesman for UNTAC, it had not been possible to identify the attackers, but Military and Civilian Police teams were investigating the incident.

The 28 year-old Colombian UNTAC peace-keeper is the eleventh UNTAC member to have died as a result of hostile action, the spokesman said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has authorized the waiver of immunity from legal process of a lieutenant in the Highway and Port Authority of the Mexican Police Force, currently assigned to the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), according to a United Nations spokesman today. The waiver was granted to facilitate the investigation in connection with the case against the Mexican national and six Salvadorian nationals for illegal drug trafficking.

The waiver does not extend however to immunity from personal arrest, detention or other related aspects. According to Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, which covers ONUSAL police observers in their capacity as experts, the Secretary-General has the right and the duty to waive the immunity of any expert in any case where the immunity would impede the course of justice.

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Almost all the major threats to human civilization transcended the nation State, and the only mechanism which permitted all States to work together was the United Nations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in a message to the Conference of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. The Conference in honour of the former Indian Prime Minister, who was assassinated in 1991, was held in New Delhi on 1 and 2 May.

The crucial challenge was to make the United Nations work, as States could not meet threats to the environment, to development, to health and to peace on their own, the Secretary-General said. The collapse of the cold war structures of international relations had brought many problems but had also offered a unique window of opportunity. The Organization was being revitalized as people realized that the main issues confronting them were interconnected.

Peace, development and democracy were mutually reinforcing, and the United Nations could no longer compartmentalize its work, he stressed. Among the issues which needed to be reconsidered were disarmament and arms control, development and the North/South relationship, and peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building.

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Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right that should not be limited, Frederico Mayor, Director-General of the United Nations Educational,

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Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), said today in a message for International Press Freedom Day.

Freedom of the press is essential for the development of democracy, he stressed. The resurgence of hatred and violence in Europe threatened the openness of mind which safeguarded the future. Elsewhere, shortcomings in communication and information restricted intellectual freedom, with serious repercussions for democracy.

Independent presses could be promoted by drawing up constitutional guarantees of freedom, strengthening organizations of editors and journalists, and establishing economic structures for development, he said. UNESCO would work to allow journalists to exercise their profession freely and to have the broadest possible access to information.

International Press Freedom Day was proclaimed to commemorate the Windhoek Declaration, which was adopted at the 1991 Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press. The Seminar was organized by UNESCO in the Namibian capital.

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The forty-sixth World Health Assembly began its session today in Geneva with the World Health Organization (WHO) seeking approval from its 185 member States for a $1.8 billion budget for the next two years. The budget reflects all of WHO's priorities to fight illness and disease in the world, including the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), malaria, tuberculosis, immunization programmes, emergency and humanitarian relief, nutrition and health and development.

The proposed regular working budget for 1994-1995, which amounts to more than $870 million, is made up of assessed contributions from member States. Extrabudgetary contributions should amount to almost $1 billion for the same period of time, bringing the total budget to 1.8 million, according to WHO's estimates.

On Wednesday, the Assembly is scheduled to elect WHO's Director-General for the next five years. Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima has been nominated for a second term of office by the 31-member Executive Board. The election is conducted by secret ballot.

The Assembly convenes against a background of profound economic and political changes internationally, including a global recession and military conflicts, which make WHO objective of achieving the highest possible level of health for all peoples a greater challenge than ever before.

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Correction:

The Secretary-General's new Special Advisor for Information and Public Policy is Gillian Martin Sorensen. Her last name was misspelled in Friday Highlights, 30 April, 1993.

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